



VISION 2020 FISCAL RESOURCES TASK GROUP
Meeting Minutes 7:30 PM 4_20_17

Senior Center First Floor Conference Room

ATTENDEES: Gordon Jamieson (Co-Chair), David Gabarino (Co-Chair), Heather Remoff, Brian Hasbrouck, Pete Howard (Secretary),

Citizens Corner

Citizen Corner #2 Town Meeting was carefully reviewed. See Ref 1. Gordon will make changes (mostly small ones) & submit tomorrow to The Advocate for publication during the 1st week of the annual Town Meeting.

Citizens Corner #3 will be an introduction to the administrative side of Town government. As before, Pete will draft & Gordon will edit for discussion in May.

Review of Warrant

Gordon provided copies. He led the group through it, article by article, pausing for discussion when someone had a question or opinion.

Future plans: Citizens Corners in May will be an introduction to the administrative side of Town government.

Meet w/ Sandy Pooler in the Fall to discuss access to Town documents: Annual Report, Financial Plan, Various Reports to Town Meeting,

NEXT MEETING: 5_18_17

Meetings monthly - 3rd Thursdays 7:30 PM - Usually in Senior Center

Ref 1 Citizens Corner #2 w/ markups

Citizens Corner

Arlington's Town Meeting

Last time we provided a general introduction to the Arlington's administrative framework and elected offices, including our legislative body Town Meeting. As Town Meeting is currently in session, this week we'll focus on this uniquely New England form of grass-root based democracy!

The organization and procedures of Town Meeting evolved during the colonial period as a way for citizens to learn about their community's needs and available resources and to debate and decide on how best to foster the growth and success of their community.

While all New England towns have Town Meetings, over 200-plus years different regions have developed their own local traditions. Given Arlington's large population (ca. 44,000) an open town meeting (where all registered voters can attend and participate) is clearly not feasible. Instead Arlington has a representative Town Meeting, where 12 representatives are elected from each of 21 precincts; making for a legislative body of 252 Town Meeting Members. As we discussed last time, members are elected each spring during the annual Town election. Any resident of the Town may run for a three year term; terms are staggered so that four seats per precinct are open each year. MCL

Arlington's Annual Town Meeting is held beginning in late April. In addition, Special Town Meetings can be called by citizens or the Board of Selectmen to address interim issues of import. ~~April~~

So how does a Town Meeting function? First an agenda, termed the Warrant, needs to be developed. Beginning in December, administrative bodies, committees, commissions and citizens of the Town begin to submit agenda items, termed Articles, for inclusion in the Warrant.

Warrant Articles generally address one of three topics: Town bylaws (laws particular to Arlington), Zoning issues, or Financial issues. After the Warrant submission period has closed in late January it is compiled and distributed to residents as a 'warning' of what will be discussed at that year's meeting.

Next, Articles are reviewed in public hearings by one of the three administrative bodies (Board of Selectmen, Arlington Redevelopment Board, Finance Committee) that will report on each Article to the Meeting. Reports from these bodies take the form of formal recommended votes and comments ~~thereon~~ and are publically available.

Town Meeting takes place in the Robbins Town Hall auditorium that was designed with this purpose in mind on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 8-11PM. On the first evening, the Meeting is called to order by the Town Moderator, a town-wide elected position that chairs the Meeting. ~~And then once~~ new/~~returning~~ members have been sworn in and the Town Clerk has certified that we have a quorum, the Meeting gets down to work.

One by one each Article (40-60 total) comes to the floor, the recommended vote debated, amendments proposed and voted upon as follows: The Moderator opens each article, recognizes members who want to discuss the article, and, once debate is finished/~~terminated~~ by vote, conducts the vote on the article. Non-member residents can also speak to the body regarding Articles of interest to them upon introduction by a member. Arlington has one of the more deliberative town meetings, in that those recognized can speak for up to seven minutes the first time, and if they dare for five minutes a second time. But in general it is amazing how quickly a body of 200-plus individuals can reach ~~consensus!~~

agreement

Once Town Meeting adjourns, Articles that require state action are forwarded onto the Attorney General for approval, otherwise they take effect upon Town Meeting's adjournment.

If you wish to learn more, a great reference is Town Meeting Time by Johnson, Trustman & Wadsworth, which is published by the Massachusetts Moderators Association. The authors have all served as Town Moderators in Massachusetts. Residents are also encouraged to attend Town Meeting (viewing from the gallery) or to watch the proceedings on local cable (ACMI) as it's a great way to learn more about Arlington.

~The Vision 2020 Fiscal Resources Task Group embraces and works to help the Town better realize the following Town goal: "We value Arlington's efficient delivery of public services providing for the common good. The benefits from these services and the responsibility of taxation will be equitably distributed among us. We will be known for our sound fiscal planning and for the thoughtful, open process by which realistic choices are made in our Town." We meet monthly and all are welcome to attend.